GRANDPARENTS

They’re altogether otherworldly now, those adults champing for their ritual Friday spin to pharmacist and five-and-ten in Brockton. Back in my throw-away and shaggy span of adolescence, Grandpa still waves his stick like a policeman; Grandmother, like a Mohammedan, still wears her thick lavender mourning and touring veil, the Pierce Arrow clears its throat in a horse-stall. Then the dry road dust rises to whiten the fatigued elm leaves— the nineteenth century, tired of children, is gone. They’re all gone into a world of light; the farm’s my own.

The farm’s my own! Back there alone, I keep indoors, and spoil another season. I hear the rattley little country gramophone racking its five foot horn: ‘O Summer Time!’ Even at noon here the formidable Ancien Régime still keeps nature at a distance. Five green shaded light bulbs spider the billiards-table, no field is greener than its cloth, where Grandpa, dipping sugar for us both, once spilled his demitasse. His favourite ball, the number three, still hides the coffee stain.

Never again to walk there, chalk our cues,